

PROGRAMME EVALUATION AND IMPACT REPORT

**Camden Schools
Art Biennale**

Authors: Sam Mitchell, Strategic Partnerships Manager,
Central Saint Martins and Gwen Lee, Education Advisor
/ Excellence Advisor for Art, Camden Learning

1 CONTENTS

② Foreword	3
③ Project Overview	6
④ Project Activities and Output	9
⑤ Feedback and Evaluation	28
⑥ Conclusions and Next Steps	34
⑦ Credits	35



2

FOREWORD

The Camden Schools Art Biennale grew from many roots:

- First and foremost, our brilliant children and young people and all our Camden schools – including the special schools, from the nurseries to the sixth forms, that grabbed the chance to become involved in a celebration of art in Camden.
- Venice's great Art Biennale itself-held every other year. A particular inspiration was Sonia Boyce. In 2022 she was the first black woman artist to represent the UK and the winner of the Golden Lion Award. Diversity and opportunity for all have been a theme of every aspect of our Biennale.
- The Camden Schools Music Festival which takes place every two years at the Royal Albert Hall and the possibility of creating a school arts festival alongside it, to strengthen the teaching of arts as well as music in our schools.
- The work of Camden Learning – a collective partnership between Camden Council and all our schools – and a new curriculum enrichment strategy giving all children the opportunity to learn to express themselves visually and creatively. Camden Council and Camden Learning were able to provide initial support and investment for the Biennale.
- The richness of Camden's creative and business communities and institutions. Most particularly Central Saint Martins, who with great flair, skill, resources and commitment made real the idea of the Biennale. We are also indebted to the Kings Cross Central Partnership and the generosity of John Lyon's Charity.
- The knowledge, experience and dedication of our Camden art teachers and the amazing leadership and management of two of our former Head Teachers, Gwen Lee and Kate Froud.
- The generosity of the artistic community in Camden, including the October Gallery, the Quentin Blake Centre, Photographers Gallery and individual artists.

'ART IS A DEEP THING'

This excellent report celebrates the many branches and activities that grew from these roots, the explosion of learning that took place, and explores how this can flourish and develop in the future.

Already there is an immediate legacy. Camden Learning has established an Excellence Lead for Art working with all our schools, and many of our primary schools are now prioritising art in the curriculum. The art learning hub is one of the most popular teaching groups. There is buzz, in our schools, with our students, with our teachers and leaders. The report also highlights new opportunities for students to explore the digital art world, to widen engagement with students and the creative community and business, show new career pathways in the creative arts, and enrich the artistic life of the borough.

One of the many activities around the Biennale was to produce 'art badges' with urgent messages. One said, 'Art is a deep thing'. We agree.

Cllr Marcus Boyland

Camden Council Lead for Best Start in Life

Angela Mason CBE

Camden Council Lead Best Start in Life 2012-22





3 **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The Camden Schools Art Biennale (CSAB) is a new celebration of artistic achievement by schools across the borough of Camden.

Launched in 2024 as a pilot initiative by Camden Council, Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London (CSM/UAL) and Camden Learning with additional support from King's Cross Central Partnership Limited and John Lyon's Charity. The project is intended to become a key pillar of the borough's cultural and educational calendar, running once every two years. This report provides an overview of the CSAB activities and reach, alongside an evaluation of its effectiveness in responding to the initial objectives.

The core of the Biennale was a week-long exhibition, celebrating art developed by every school and every key stage of learning in Camden – from primary education through to A-Level. Alongside the exhibition, an engagement and events programme also provided opportunities for families, young people, teachers, artists and CSM students and staff to work together- attempting to lift standards for creative education and opportunities for cultural exchange across the borough.

Prior to the exhibition, a major component of the CSAB initiative was a range of outreach work within schools, particularly those that do not have dedicated art teaching or facilities. For the pilot this work was primarily arranged by Camden Learning, using independent artists alongside contributions from a range of arts organisations within the borough, including The Photographers Gallery, The October Gallery and others. CSM/UAL's Outreach department also contributed to the pre-Biennale outreach work through the placement of students within schools through the 'Creative Undergraduates in Schools Programme'.

The 2024 pilot was enabled by funding from Camden Council, John Lyon's Charity (to enable outreach activity in schools), and King's Cross Central Limited Partnership has also contributed funding in support of the core exhibition and extending the works into the public realm around Kings Cross in Spring 2025.

One of the primary goals of the pilot initiative is to demonstrate that the Camden Schools Art Biennale can become an enduring sister-event to the Camden Schools' Music Festival, which sees every music class in Camden perform at the Royal Albert Hall to an audience of 3,000 people and live-streamed to 14,000 homes.

OBJECTIVES

The CSAB initiative had several key objectives, developed through the partnership formed between Camden Council, CSM/UAL and Camden Learning. These objectives linked back to the development of Camden Council's education strategy from 2020 - 2030, which aimed to:

- Strengthen and inform the teaching of art in Camden schools and beyond. Specifically, working to enhance the prestige of art teaching and the arts curriculum.
- Showcase Camden as a centre of arts and creative education excellence in the UK and bring a wide, diverse and prestigious audience to see students' work within the borough. This is key during a period when art and design provision faces a number of threats within the curriculum and education policy landscape.
- Open student's eyes to the possibilities of a career in the arts, design and creative sector, through exposure to the creative community in and around UAL/, as well as the broader networks of cultural practitioners and artists in the area.
- Build links between local schools, arts organisations and businesses.
- Celebrate the diversity and creativity of all of Camden's young people including those with SEND and those from less advantaged backgrounds.

In year one of the initiative specific performance indicators were not set against these objectives, but this report provides some initial baseline information through which to compare future versions of the initiative.



4 PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

This section outlines the key activities and outputs that took place through the Biennale, including the outreach activities before the launch and exhibition of the CSAB at the Lethaby and Window Galleries at Central Saint Martins; the gallery exhibition itself;

and the events and activation programme around the exhibition. The table below provides an overview of all activities that took place throughout the course of the initiative:

Name of activity	Description	Participant or Audience Number
Outreach activities pre-exhibition		
Artists-in-Schools Programme	Four independent artists commissioned by Camden Learning led a range of 2.5 day workshops focused on artistic processes and production across 21 Primary School classes in Camden. These were focused on schools where arts provision was limited.	41 classes (approximately 1,190 pupils) 22 teachers + support staff.
Outreach activities with partner organisations		
October Gallery	Visits and art workshops at the October Gallery	20 sessions for primary, secondary and special, over 500 students
October Gallery	Illustrators in schools	5 schools (primary, secondary and special schools — around 150 students)
Central Saint Martins	Creative Undergraduates in Schools CSM outreach art project undergraduates supporting art teaching in primary schools	2 primary schools — 60 students

Name of activity

Description

Participant or Audience Number

Continuing Professional Development for teachers

Teacher training / October Gallery	CPD for secondary, special and primary teachers led by specialist at October Gallery	2 x 3 hour training for approximately 25 teachers
Teacher training / Central Saint Martins	CPD for secondary art teachers	16 teachers
Art Lead meetings	Meetings to support art leads from primary and secondary to understand and prepare for the Biennale and to share best practice and ways to raise the profile of art in schools	2 Primary school art lead meetings (approx 40 attendees at each) 2 secondary school art lead meetings (approx 10 attendees at each)
Primary to secondary visits	Secondary art departments led sessions for local primary schools	4 secondary schools. Attended by approx 240 pupils

Exhibition Workshop and Events Programme

Awake Late	A CSM-student curated arts and performance evening at the exhibition, aimed at an older age range of 16-18 year olds	31 + performers and organisers
Hands Workshop	Student art workshop led by Alex Schady, Programme Director of Fine Art at Central Saint Martins	2 students
Family Workshop Events	Art workshops led by October Gallery during the exhibition across two days	87 children and 75 adults participated
Ways of Looking workshops	Artist led workshops based in and around the Biennale exhibition	18 workshops for primary schools. Approximately 520 pupils
Educators Roundtable	Educators and artists discussion event	66 participants

Name of activity	Description	Participant or Audience Number
Exhibition		
Exhibition total audience figures	The Camden Schools Art Biennale exhibition ran for 7 days from 11th July - 17th July	5,249 attendees over 7 days. This does not include audiences of the exhibition who viewed the open-access Window Galleries situated at Central Saint Martins
Total school classes visiting the Biennale	Schools brought in individual classes to visit the Biennale over the course of the week	76 classes from 26 schools across Camden
Camden Schools Art Biennale Launch Event	A closed private event with leaders across the education, arts and business community in Camden and King's Cross to launch the Biennale	203 attendees

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES PRE-EXHIBITION

A major component of the CSAB initiative was to develop outreach activities that would raise the standard of arts education across the borough.

The aim was aligned to the objective around strengthening and informing the teaching of art in Camden schools and beyond. Specifically, working to enhance the prestige of art teaching and the arts curriculum. Outreach work was done in a number of ways. Firstly, individual artists were assigned to schools by the CSAB team. Secondly, a range of partner organisations such as The October Gallery and Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration aligned outreach activities with the Biennale, and thirdly, teacher training sessions with outreach practitioners.





ARTISTS WORKING IN SCHOOLS

Schools were identified for support through a questionnaire and self-evaluation activity. Art leads used a criteria form to rate current provision as: Beginning, Developing, Embedding or Leading.

Four artist practitioners led 2 day workshops across 21 primary schools. In addition to the practical workshops with classes, the artist led planning sessions with teachers and art leads to ensure the sessions fitted within the school curriculum and achieved long term impact. The aim was to build on current school practice, providing training and support for staff to enable best practice to be developed and embedded.

Artists worked across key stages EYFS, KS1 and KS2 generally working with 2 classes and their staff in each project. All resources and staff were provided to the schools through funding from John Lyon's Charity, without a direct cost to the school. Feedback showed schools were particularly positive about the impact the sessions had on teacher professional development, providing opportunities to see how skills could be developed to enable progression, how different media could be used within a project and how to expand the range and diversity of artists used to inspire work. Schools and artists completed a post-workshop evaluation form including the question: How will this support future art provision in your school? Feedback was highly positive, with responses focusing on the inspiration provided by the sessions and the quality of experience:

'The ideas given on the day have influenced our thinking about the art curriculum as a whole. We are going to take a fresh look at it in terms of progression and definitely include a prominent focus on drawing. We were expertly guided in our thinking in the pre-meeting towards looking at drawing and that was a powerful steer-it has prompted so much reflection and thinking forward'. — [St Mary and St Pancras School](#)

'Both sessions have given me some great ideas to include in our scheme of work. It has opened my eyes to seeing what other materials the children can work with and how a good art lesson is structured. It was very beneficial for the pupils and myself.' — [Christ Church School](#)

OUTREACH WITH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

The aim of the outreach work with partner organisations was to build links between local schools, arts organisations and businesses.

A number of Camden-based arts organisations were approached to link with schools as part of the Biennale. Effective partnerships were developed with the October Gallery, The Quentin Blake Centre and the Photographers Gallery.



OCTOBER GALLERY SCHOOL VISITS AND WORKSHOPS **& THE QUENTIN BLAKE CENTRE FOR ILLUSTRATION**

Specialist education staff planned school sessions linked with current exhibitions of contemporary artists e.g. LR Vandy.

The workshops were accessed by primary, special and secondary schools. The workshops provided opportunities for pupils to be inspired by and to critically explore and discuss the exhibitions. Practical sessions linked with the national curriculum and provided ideas for developing art skills, providing progression and pitch appropriate to the age group. Feedback from all schools was very positive.

‘Great range offered in the session for developing art skills. The more experience of being in a gallery environment the better. The opportunity for the children to critically explore the exhibition was really useful.’ – **Art Lead**

Professional illustrators led sessions in primary and secondary schools, sharing their practice and leading practical art sessions teaching a range of skills.

Teacher feedback was very positive - noting for example that children developed an understanding of how illustrators convey mood and character. This also provided a new link for the schools involved, many of whom have decided to book further sessions and build this opportunity into their art curriculum.



TEACHER TRAINING SESSIONS **WITH OUTREACH PARTNERS**

A key aim of the CSAB programme was to strengthen and inform the teaching of art in Camden schools and beyond. Specifically, working to enhance the prestige of art teaching and the arts curriculum.

This responded directly to feedback that Camden Learning and other organisations had about the lack of opportunity for art teachers in particular, whereas much more attention was being paid to initiatives for young people. Initial training sessions were led by CSM for secondary schools and involved both staff and students from three programmes: Graphic Communication Design, Fine Art and Spatial Practices (Architecture and Urbanism). Half-day CPD sessions included a guided tour of the CSM building and facilities, a talk from the Recruitment team and bespoke workshops designed by specialist Course teams.

Teachers could select from two options: Fine Art and Graphics or Fine Art and Spatial Practices. This aspect of the programme could potentially be expanded in future work on CSAB to incorporate more disciplines.

Two training sessions led by the October Gallery focussed on the use of exhibitions to inspire critical thinking and to inspire practical art activities. Teachers benefited from working cross-phase with colleagues from primary, special and secondary to share and develop ideas.

Teachers particularly liked learning activities that could be incorporated into their teaching, making and responding to art within a gallery, focusing on process as well as outcome. They were positive about the diversity of artists and requested further information on building a more representative range of works into their curriculum. Teachers reported that they would use and share their new learning with other staff

‘A very useful evening – learnt more practical tips/activities, found new artists and a new space to use.’ — [Art Lead](#)

THE MAIN EXHIBITION: **CENTRAL SAINT MARTINS LETHABY GALLERY** **AND WINDOW GALLERIES JULY 2024**

The core concept of the Camden Schools Art Biennale exhibition was to place student work from Key Stage 1 through to A Level, across every school in Camden, on an elevated, professional gallery footing. The outreach programme therefore contributed to the development of works across primary schools in particular that would be suitable for the exhibition.

In total, over 350 individual or collaborative art works were presented across the gallery spaces at Central Saint Martins, representing a major showcase of youth artwork via schools within the borough. In Year 1 of the Biennale, the partners decided not to impose an overriding exhibition theme, but instead work with submissions from individual schools. The rationale for this was that imposing an additional theme onto the school curriculum would be too much of a burden without enough lead time to the initiative.

CURATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Schools were invited to provide six pieces of work from each primary school (one from each age group), alongside nine pieces from Secondary School level.

In total 53 schools submitted work (37 primary, 1 Nursery school, 3 specialist provisions, 2 hospital schools and 10 secondary schools). Alongside the works, schools were asked to provide some information about media, size and any relevant titles or themes for the work as they submitted them.

Works were submitted a month in advance of the gallery launch. At this point, CSM's exhibition design and curation team worked to categorise, cluster and thematically link the works submitted by young people of all ages. In total, 12 themes for the work were identified, clustering them as follows:



Each theme was then linked to both a series of questions, ranging from simple questions to more complex prompts, and a series of associated skills and careers - in order to prompt young people to think about the career and progression components linked to creative practice.

The work was clustered around these themes within the gallery, with a large workbench and seating area for hosting workshops and some of the in-gallery activities. Work was deliberately hung lower than standard gallery showcases to centre the work around young people's height and sightlines.

The gallery opened on the 11th July 2024 and ran for 7 days until 17th July 2024, bringing in an audience of 5,249 attendees. This figure was the highest daily average number of attendees for the Lethaby Gallery since the move to King's Cross in 2012.



EXHIBITION EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS PROGRAMME

Alongside the main exhibition was a series of events, workshops and in-gallery activations to draw in visitor groups.

The primary focus of the events was on encouraging school groups to visit the exhibition and interact with the works in different ways, capturing both the excitement of seeing the art in a gallery setting, but also creating an active way of engaging with the programme.



WAYS OF LOOKING: SCHOOL WORKSHOPS **WITHIN THE BIENNALE EXHIBITION**

The aim of these workshops was to showcase Camden as a centre of arts and creative education excellence in the UK and bring a wide, diverse and prestigious audience to see students' work within the borough. Celebrate the diversity and creativity of all of Camden's young people including those with SEND and those from less advantaged backgrounds.

To support engagement with the exhibition, school workshops were offered within the Biennale exhibition space. Two of the artists who had worked in schools led groups from primary and special schools with a focus on exploring the artworks and creating their own responses. This resulted in a cumulative art piece. Schools noted that children spent more time examining individual works and talking about what they liked, media and techniques used and how this would inspire them.



AWAKE LATE AND HANDS WORKSHOP

The Awake Late evening event and Hands Workshop were programmed by CSM's staff and faculty within the gallery setting.

The Awake Late was a take on the traditional museum 'late', with dance and puppetry performances programmed by CSM's Student Producers, alongside more workshop-based activities. This was primarily targeted at 16-18 year olds, but was ultimately open to all audiences who wanted to join for the evening event.

The hands workshop was developed by CSM's Programme Director for Fine Art, Alex Schady, and aimed to provide school age children with an experience of making artworks in an art school context - both physically and conceptually. This meant working at a very large scale, from unusual materials and activating these through performance in the public sphere.





FAMILY WORKSHOP EVENTS

Alongside visits from school groups through the structured school visits, the programme also sought to maximise the amount of engagement from families across the weekend of the exhibition.

Hosted by The October Gallery, CSM opened up family-focused workshops in the area outside of the main exhibition, to provide an offer for families inspired by the gallery.





5 **FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION**

The CSAB initiative gathered feedback and audience responses in a number of different ways. This section of the report outlines the different forms of feedback and summarises the responses from each of them. It then aims to provide a short synthesis of how the project achieved its initial objectives at the start of the programme.

The different forms of feedback gathered are as follows:

1. Reaction cards and exhibition feedback directly from audience members in the gallery: Audiences were asked to draw, write or describe their responses to the gallery exhibition on the day they attended. In total, 140 audience feedback cards were collected over the course of the Biennale.
2. Formal survey of teachers post-exhibition: A short survey was issued to teachers involved in the Camden Schools Art Biennale in September 2024, in order to assess how well the Biennale performed against the original project objectives. Responses were gathered from 41 schools (primarily the art lead in each school) from a total of 53 participant schools in the initiative.
3. Feedback from Headteachers: More informal feedback was gathered from Headteachers following the launch of the Biennale and during the course of the exhibition, which is incorporated in the reporting.
4. Audience data: Audience data has been reported in the section above, but some of the data provides input on whether specific objectives have been met.

The following section aims to collate some of these findings against the individual objectives of the Biennale.

1 Strengthen and inform the teaching of art in Camden schools and beyond. Specifically, working to enhance the prestige of art teaching and the arts curriculum.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the Biennale made an impact against this objective. 85% of teachers surveyed believed the Camden Schools Art Biennale strengthened and informed the teaching of art in their schools and raised the profile and prestige of art teaching and the arts curriculum in their school. Furthermore, 88% of

'THIS SHOW HAS MADE ME CRY. IT IS WONDERFUL AND IN THE FACE OF THE DECIMATION OF ARTS AND CREATIVE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS IN THE LAST 14 YEARS IT IS A WONDER AND A TRIUMPH'

teachers who participated in an additional Biennale activity (i.e workshop) believe it had a positive impact on art teaching. Some adult attendees to the Biennale also picked up on the links to strengthening arts education in the curriculum with a specific focus on funding. One attendee stated 'Art is a human need. Art is a human right. Fund arts education properly!' while another stated 'This show has made me cry. It is wonderful and in the face of the decimation of arts and creative education in schools in the last 14 years it is a wonder and a triumph'.

Looking forward, teachers were also enthusiastic about doing more in this area. 78% of teachers wanted to develop links between Central Saint Martins and schools with regards to workshops and portfolio guidance, which would serve to enhance teaching further.

There has also been a post-programme boost for arts teaching in Camden. The status of art has been raised at both school and Local Authority level, with The Local Authority appointing an Excellence Lead for Art to build upon the good practice and links with arts organisations developed through the Biennale. Ten primary schools are currently being supported through art curriculum reviews and staff development, with Art being selected as a priority for school improvement. Attendance at the Art Lead meetings for Camden schools is now the highest of all subjects and partnerships and visits to galleries have significantly increased.

2 Showcase Camden as a centre of arts and creative education excellence in the UK and bring a wide, diverse and prestigious audience to see students' work within the borough.

For an initial pilot year, CSAB had a short exhibition run of 7 days - in terms of audience numbers, 5,249 visitors came through the main exhibition at the Lethaby Gallery. However, the majority of these audiences were made up of school groups, rather than broader audiences who may have been interested in coming to see the Biennale exhibition for other reasons. The exhibition was therefore impactful in terms of one of its primary audience groups, but less so on a broader or more general audience demographic

'EVERYTHING ABOUT THE ARTISTS IN SCHOOL AND THE EXHIBITION ITSELF WAS A JOY!'

Teachers were highly positive about the Biennale's impact in this area though. 95% of teachers surveyed agreed that the exhibition showcased Camden as a centre of arts and creative education excellence in the UK. The standard clearly made a large impact on individual teachers too, with one saying 'Everything about the artists in school and the exhibition itself was a JOY!...the exhibition was breath-taking. At times I was tearful.... Joyful, celebratory, beautifully created, no pretence. Thank you to everyone involved.'

Headteachers were also highly enthusiastic about the positioning of the initiative, with one echoing the teacher comments above, saying 'It was truly inspiring and such a celebration of all the amazing work that goes on in all the Camden schools.' and another saying, 'It really is phenomenal. Breath-taking, joyful and really quite moving.'

Attendees to the Biennale were overwhelmingly positive in their feedback to the show, with many specifically pointing to the elevation of the individual work through the curation and prestige of a gallery showcase. One adult attendee summarised this, saying 'I loved this installation! Camden has very talented schoolchildren. The art, each piece beautiful and expressive on its own but even more meaningful as a collection. We are more together'. Children echoed this sentiment in their own language, saying 'I love all the drawing. It makes me feel happy', 'super cool and engaging to see your own work in an exhibition' and 'that everyone's art combined (to) make a beautiful piece of art' - perhaps hinting that the sum of the whole exhibition was greater than the individual works.

3 Open student's eyes to the possibilities of a career in the arts, design and creative sector, through exposure to the creative community in and around UAL/, as well as the broader networks of cultural practitioners and artists in the area.

One of the goals of CSAB was not only to present high-quality work from young artists across Camden but to get school children to think about routes into the creative industries and creative jobs from the various outreach, gallery and workshop activities that took place. In terms of concrete

actions to achieve this, the exhibition grouped job roles to the thematic breakdown of works, thinking about how artistic expression linked to potential career paths. Work by the various outreach practitioners and arts organisations also put children directly into contact with artists and creatives, making an explicit link to work.

Teachers involved in the initiative felt that it had been less successful in achieving impact in this area - only 65% of surveyed teachers agreed that CSAB opened student's eyes to the possibilities of a career in the arts, design and creative sector, although 85% agreed that the Biennale's activities have a positive impact on the skills, knowledge and capabilities of pupils. One headmaster did think that the programme was a positive contributor to young people thinking about future skills and work - 'It was really inspiring. For me thinking about the curriculum but also for the potential impact it could have on a young person seeing themselves in the arts as a career.'

Attendee feedback to the gallery seemed to echo the view of teachers that the exhibition had been less specifically impactful on thinking about future career aspirations. A large number of children who visited the Biennale talked in general terms about being inspired by the show and the programme, but did not link that specifically to future work. Typical responses from young people were 'thank you for all of this. They have inspired me' and 'it (the exhibition) has inspired me to make something BIG' without linking it to the world of work. This may be due to the age of the young people, as it is likely the majority were at primary school age.

**'IT HAS INSPIRED ME TO
MAKE SOMETHING BIG'**

4 Build links between local schools, arts organisations and businesses.

The strength and variety of the outreach work developed through the initiative (both in the build up to the main exhibition and during it) shows that there were some tangible developments in terms of building links between local schools and arts organisations in particular, although less so for businesses.

Camden Learning led outreach activities linking schools to The Photographers Gallery, October Gallery and The Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration. Central Saint Martins also contributed in this space, and in total 29 individual workshops or sessions were delivered by these partners into schools. The Biennale in some cases may not have led to new outreach activities taking place, but has served to align work by partner organisations towards a common objective around promoting artistic excellence for young people in Camden. Teachers broadly agreed that CSAB had made some impact in this area, with 75% agreeing that it helped build links between local schools, arts organisations and businesses.

Due to the short lead-in time for Biennale delivery and planning, in it's pilot year, this aspect remains one of the key areas where there is future potential, with a number of networks across the borough (such as the Knowledge Quarter and Camden STEAM) actively engaged in helping to build the work for future years.

- 5 Celebrate the diversity and creativity of all of Camden's young people including those with SEND and those from less advantaged backgrounds.**

**'90% OF TEACHERS BELIEVED
THAT CSAB SUCCESSFULLY
CELEBRATED THE DIVERSITY
AND CREATIVITY OF ALL OF
CAMDEN'S YOUNG PEOPLE'**

The initiative aimed to be inclusive in its approach to involving all Camden Schools. Special Schools and Hospital Schools participated in the submission of art works to the Biennale, and were represented alongside the work by all other schools. Outreach work was also specifically conducted with Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children and Swiss Cottage Special School.

90% of teachers believed that CSAB successfully celebrated the diversity and creativity of all of Camden's young people including those with SEND and those from less advantaged backgrounds and 85% agreed that the Biennale's activities had a positive impact on pupil self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing. One of the advantages of the programme was that it made use of work conducted within the curriculum, meaning students participated in the programme regardless of their background.

Attendees were generally very positive about the diversity of the exhibition and picked up on the inclusivity of work across all schools in Camden. One adult commented that it was positive 'how diverse all of the artwork is and how people of all ages can create so much.'

6 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Camden Schools Art Biennale, launched as a pilot initiative in 2024, has been a highly positive programme for both the partner organisations, school teachers and, through feedback, the young people that have participated in the programme.

For the stakeholders, the initiative provides a strong proof-of-concept that a bi-annual exhibition and programme of artistic outreach and schools-based activities is of significant value within the borough of Camden. For teachers, there was a strong endorsement of the programme, with 97% of schools indicating they would like to participate in the Biennale in future. For young people, the exhibition marks a celebratory moment for all of the hard work taking place in arts and creative practice in schools.

The majority of next steps with the programme focus on how to refine and potentially grow the initiative, leading to a stable programme for future years. Drawing on teacher and other feedback, key areas for future consideration are:

1. Making the exhibition longer and exploring at which point in the year schools are most able to engage with the programme - with many citing time and scheduling as a limiting factor in being more involved.
2. Finding ways to engage more young people in the development and delivery of the programme, perhaps linked to Camden's STEAM work, which has established models for work experience and school-business partnerships.
3. With more lead time, building on the positive attention and momentum generated by the biennale to draw in more cultural and artistic institutions as possible programme partners and outreach partners to the CSAB initiative.
4. Finding additional ways to link the programme to work on creative careers and careers development more broadly, adding to its usefulness as a cultural intervention for young people.
5. Thinking about whether thematic contact could be developed at the outset of the programme, rather than layered onto an open submission of art works.
6. Exploring the exhibition and concept as a multi-venue, rather than single venue, Biennale.
7. Developing a clearer evaluation framework or Theory of Change model for the Biennale, which would allow for a stronger analysis of the impact of the initiative.

7 CREDITS

BIENNALE TEAM

Angela Mason CBE, Biennale Concept; former Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families, Camden Council

Claire Levin, Secondary School Lead, Head of Art, Regent High School.

Councillor Marcus Boyland, Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families, Camden Council

Gwen Lee, Education Advisor, Camden Learning

Kate Froid OBE, Education Advisor, Camden Learning

Abbie Vickress, Co-Curator, Central Saint Martins

Kate Keara Pelen, Project Lead & Cultural Programmer, Central Saint Martins

Leonidas Liolios, Identity and Exhibition Graphic Designer, Central Saint Martins

Lucy Bolland, Innovation Coordinator, Central Saint Martins

Martin McGrath, Co-Curator and Exhibition Designer, Central Saint Martins

Mia Cormack, Creative Producer, Central Saint Martins

Nana Maiolini, Videographer

Natascha Ng, Project Support, Central Saint Martins

Sam Mitchell, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Central Saint Martins

Tenley Tomlinson, Event Illustrator

Thanks to the many colleagues across Camden Council, Central Saint Martins and Camden Learning who have made huge contributions to the concept and delivery of this project, including our brilliant specialist exhibition technicians, Arts Temps support team and the Crowndale Centre.

Artist practitioners – school workshops

Alix Smith, Jan Periton, Kally Laurence, Katrin Hall

ADDITIONAL THANKS

We would also like to extend thanks to these additional people, who have helped to launch the first edition of the Camden Schools Arts Biennale: Dinah Caine CBE, Georgia Gould, Jodie Eastwood, Monica Hundal, Rathna Ramanathan, Susannah Rees and Zerritha Brown.

Finally, thank you to the schools, teachers and students for sharing their work and making the Camden Schools Art Biennale a reality.

PARTNERSHIP

The Camden Schools Art Biennale is a partnership initiative between Camden Council, Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London and Camden Learning. The initiative has also received generous funding and support from King's Cross Central Partnership Limited and John Lyon's Charity. Additional material support to the exhibition has been generously provided by G . F Smith.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jamie Johnson on behalf of Central Saint Martins

Jamie Pazmino on behalf of Camden Learning

John Sturrock on behalf of Related Argent



Camden Schools
Art Biennale

Sam Mitchell,
Strategic Partnerships Manager
Central Saint Martins
samuel.mitchell@csm.arts.ac.uk